

B. S. m. N.

A
SERMON

Preached at

BARBICAN

IN

LONDON,

December 24. 1721.

UPON THE

DEATH

Of the Reverend

Dr. JOHN GALE.

By JOSEPH BURROUGHS.

LONDON,

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Printed by J. ...
O.C. ...
For ...
and ...

2 TIM. IV. 7, 8.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also, that love his appearing.

TH O the former part of these words seems to regard only the apostle himself, who had been perhaps the greatest proficient *in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*, mentioned in the whole new testament; yet the latter part plainly shews, that the substance of the things spoken of is not to be confin'd to men of his exalted character, but belongs to *all that love Christ's appearing*. This therefore will abundantly justify my complying with their desire, who chose to have a discourse from these words upon the present melancholy occasion.

They are introduc'd by St. Paul as the words of a dying father, to enforce the charge he had been giving to his son Timothy from the beginning

ing of this chapter. *I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be instant, in season, out of season; reprove; rebuke; exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine: for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they will turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables: but watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry.* For immediately after this solemn charge, the apostle assures *Timothy* that he was fully satisfied he should continue but a little longer to have the opportunity of giving him such admonitions; *v. 6. I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand:* by which words he foretold the near approach of his martyrdom under the emperor *Nero*: and then follow the words of our text; wherein he not only refreshes his own mind with the views of the glorious reward he was going to receive for his faithful labours and sufferings in the service of Christ; but likewise encourages *Timothy* to tread in the same steps, with an assured hope of the same glorious recompence. This is a brief view of the design of our text. In discoursing from which, I shall consider

- I. The apostle's pleasing reflection upon his past fidelity.
- II. His joyful prospect of a glorious reward.
- III.

III. The encouragement he gives to all those who in their several spheres of action faithfully discharge their duty. I observe

I. The apostle's pleasing reflection upon his own past fidelity.

This reflection is contain'd in ver. 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.* There is no room to doubt that the apostle made this reflection with pleasure, since he subjoins the expectation of happiness as a reward of his fidelity in the words immediately following; besides that the things themselves spoken of are such as cannot fail of exciting a rational joy in a human soul, which will easily appear by enquiring into the following particulars.

1. *I have fought a good fight*: or, as it might more properly have been render'd, *I have fought the good fight* *. The apostle had made this phrase familiar to himself: for in his former epistle to Timothy, ch. 6. 12. he exhorts him to do the same thing, and with the same view; *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.* And he applies the same expression to the circumstances of every christian, 1 Cor. 9. 25. *Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.* By

* τὸν ἀγῶνα τὸν καλὸν ἠγωνίσμαι.

† πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος, the same word which in our text is render'd fighting.

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which figurative way of speaking 'tis manifest that he alludes to the exercises practised among the ancient Grecians, wherein they contended, or strove for the mastery. Sometimes the apostle compares the circumstances of christians to a state of war, as in *Ephes. 6. 11—16.* which passage I take notice of the rather, because it likewise contains an allusion to one of the exercises used upon those occasions to which our texts refers. *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* Indeed, the armour of God here describ'd regards chiefly a time of affliction and persecution; in which *evil day*, our grand adversary is properly represented as instigating wicked men, his agents, to exercise their malice against the faithful, and as soliciting good men by the fear of temporal evils, to cast off their fidelity. But as there are dangerous oppositions to our integrity, employ'd at other times besides those of persecution; and as *the fighting of the good fight,*
in

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in our text, cannot be confined to such trials; I shall consider the phrase in a larger view, as comprehending a diligent, resolute, and persevering opposition to all those evils which stand in the way of our faithfulness to God.

Now, 'tis certain that every christian, and especially every minister of Christ's gospel, is furrounded with many dangers in maintaining his integrity. The enjoyments of this world, which are so agreeable to our animal appetites, are always soliciting our affections. And how great is the difficulty in many cases of giving to our reason and judgment that superiority over our affections which is their due? how difficult is the combat in which we are engag'd even with ourselves? how apt are we to be betray'd and overcome by an enemy from within? How great especially must the danger be, when violence, or at least reproach, is on the one side to discourage our integrity, and the flattering allurements of this world on the other, to tempt us to cast it away? And certainly there is no christian, especially no minister of Christ, but is exposed in these respects. Even where there is no open persecution, the solemn profession of christianity and the strict adherence to it in private christians, and much more the recommending and the vindication of it in ministers, are the objects of that contempt which is sufficient to discourage any but those who are resolute and constant, while at the same time pleasure, or profit, or honour and power, or perhaps all these together combine to invite us another way.

This

This is indeed putting things in a view something different from the metaphorical representation in our text. But, to keep more closely to the similitude there mentioned; 'tis by men, our fellow-creatures, that these dangers are directly and immediately brought upon us: whatever violent opposition we meet with in the way of our duty, comes immediately from them; and so likewise does that shame, that contempt and reproach, which we are sometimes so apt to fear: 'tis from men likewise that solicitations to ease, and pleasure, and riches, and honour, do immediately proceed; at least they must be expected by their means. And besides all this, we have good reason to believe, that *our adversary the devil*, who is full of subtilty, and eagerly bent upon our ruin, as well as upon defeating all our good designs, does by some secret artifice labour to encrease our hopes and our fears, and improve wicked inclinations in the hearts of those men from whom our dangers do more immediately proceed. So that it requires the utmost resolution, and the most diligent and constant watchfulness of a skilful combatant, to gain the victory over all these oppositions.

Well therefore might the apostle call this fight *the good fight*, by way of eminency; for 'tis of all others the most honourable and the most advantageous: besides, that there is no victory so necessary to be gain'd, there is none so glorious in itself, none that will be so highly rewarded. We are lost for ever, if we suffer ourselves to be overcome; we are *more than*

conquerors, if we gain the victory; and the peace and happiness which will ensue are greater than can be conceiv'd. Moreover, for our encouragement, notwithstanding the great strength, and subtilty, and malice of our enemies, we are sure to overcome, if we will but continue fighting, and do not lay down our arms.

The thoughts however of coming off victorious, after having been often engaged in this combate with such formidable enemies, might well be reflected on by the apostle with pleasure. He had in many things restrain'd his inclinations, and deny'd himself for the sake of the gospel, the comfort of which he now enjoy'd. He had resisted many temptations to renounce the christian faith, and to return to the religion of the Jews, in which he was brought up, and in which he had made greater proficiency than most of his contemporaries. And if he had given way to these temptations, he had in all probability secured his peace, and made himself as great as any man of his own nation. But, such solicitations as these he look'd upon as enemies to his welfare, and therefore fought against them with all his might: *what things had been gain to him, those he counted loss for Christ;* tho he had more and greater advantages to reckon up on the side of the law, than most of his brethren, as he himself shews, *Phil. 3. 4—8.* But, the apostle had not only withstood flattering promises and allurements, but likewise open violence. He had before the writing of this epistle suffer'd almost all the evils that could be under-

undergone, short of death itself; a large account whereof we have 2 Cor. 11. where, among other things, we find him mentioning stripes above measure, imprisonments, deaths oft, *i. e.* frequent dangers of death, beatings with rods, stonings, perils by his own countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the city, perils among false brethren. All these were instances of violence practised against him by reason of his resolution to maintain his christian profession. And to the same account may be added all the other sufferings reckon'd up in the same chapter; his abundant labours, often journeyings, perils of waters, perils of robbers, weariness and painfulness, hunger and thirst, often fastings, and cold and nakedness; for with all these he might be said to struggle and to fight, as they must necessarily be contrary to the inclinations of flesh and blood. As he had thro the grace of God gained the victory over all the dangers with which he had been surrounded; he might at the end of the battle very well look upon it as a good fight, and renew the thoughts of it with pleasure.

There is, I lay, a rational pleasure to be taken in such a reflexion as this, even by the most humble christian in the world. And such a one was this apostle St. Paul. He was far from glorying in his own strength, or trusting to it. He readily acknowledg'd his insufficiency, even to think any thing as of himself; and own'd that his sufficiency was of God; 2 Cor. 3. 5. But he had the honesty to make a right use of the power which Christ afforded him; and accordingly

dingly made his boast of that, *Phil. 4. 12, 13.* I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need: I can do all things thro Christ who strengthneth me. And to the same purpose he speaks, *1 Cor. 15. 10.* By the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestow'd upon me was not in vain, but I labour'd more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. He knew that God wrought in him both to will and to do * of his own goodness; and therefore did he earnestly labour to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling; according to the advice which he gave to the *Philippians*, founded upon the same argument, *ch. 2. 12, 13.* And we see he was blessed with the comfort of it. It was this which at the latter end of his days gave him the agreeable reflection in our text; it was this which long before had made him speak so triumphantly, *2 Cor. 1. 12.* Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you wards.

Thus much, I think, may suffice to shew that St. Paul, in saying he had fought the good fight, did reflect with pleasure upon his past fidelity to God; that he had good reason so to do; and that this was not at all inconsistent

* *ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.*

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with the humble opinion he had concerning himself, or with the efficiency he ascribed to the divine grace. Having been so large in this first particular, I shall say the less to the other things contained in *ver. 7.* However, 'tis proper to take notice of them, because there is some variety. Therefore, when the apostle says,

2. *I have finished my course* ; 'tis plain he calls to mind with joy his having persever'd diligently and constantly in the way of his duty. 'Tis a similitude taken from *running*, which was one of those publick exercises already mention'd, wherein judges presided to determine to whom the prize belong'd. Which similitude is follow'd and improv'd more largely in *Heb. 12. 1, 2.* Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him, endur'd the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. The same thing is likewise particularly describ'd in the passage already refer'd to, *1 Cor. 9. 24—27.* Know ye not that they who run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize ? so run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air : but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection ;
left

lest by any means when I have preach'd to others, I my self should be a cast-away. And, to mention but one passage more; there is a most lively description of this exercise given us by this apostle in his own person, *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.* Not as tho I had already attained, either were already perfected: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In all these places St. Paul describes the necessary qualifications of one who would be victorious in running of a race: particularly he signifies that a man must lay aside every heavy load, and whatever will be apt to encumber him; that he must keep on in the path which leads towards the prize, and not run this way and that way at uncertainties; moreover, that he must be prepar'd with temperance, or else he will never hold on to the end of the race; and further, that he must pursue his course with such a constancy and patience, such a diligence and earnestness, as may shew that he is very unwilling to lose the prize for which he contends.

It must therefore be a very delightful thought in the apostle's mind, which made him say in the words of our text, *he had finish'd his course*, and was now arriv'd at the end of it; since it appears that the course could not be finish'd with-

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out a great deal of difficulty. He had abundant reason to rejoice that he had not been distanc'd by turning out of the way ; that he had thrown off those things as weights and incumbrances, which some are apt to value more than the prize itself for which they profess to contend ; and carefully avoided that eager desire of worldly advantages and pleasures, and that fear of temporal evils, which would by engaging his affections, have prevented the successful running of his race ; that he had suppress'd carnal inclinations, born with patience the fatigues of his employment, and persisted with diligence and constancy in God's appointed way. This is, as I observ'd before, a rational ground of rejoicing. And so is what he adds,

3. *I have kept the faith.* Which words, if they have any special regard to doctrines, must signify that the apostle had laboured to inform his mind, and establish his judgment in the great truths of the gospel ; and had likewise impress'd them upon his heart, and maintain'd and adhered to them in his practice. For, they who proceed no further in *the faith* than merely to inform their understandings in the doctrines of christianity, and do not impress them upon their hearts as the principles of action, can never be said to *keep the faith*, unless it be in that sense which the apostle mentions, *Rom. 1. 18.* concerning those who *hold or detain the truth in unrighteousness* : which will be so far from denominating them believers, or faithful men, that it will shew they have rejected in reality those
very

very doctrines which they are convinced are true.

But the original words may very well be rendered *, *I have kept my fidelity*: and it seems to have been the apostle's principal design to signify, that he had kept that integrity and faithfulness which a soldier owes to his general, and a servant to his master; that in much adversity he had discharg'd the trust committed to him, with honesty and constancy of mind. And what renders this sense the more probable, is, that it necessarily includes a serious regard to the doctrines of the gospel, in one who had profess'd and taught them as the ground of men's hope for eternal life. I shall not determine which of these two was chiefly the apostle's meaning; especially since either way they are a rational ground of joy upon reflection.

Thus I have done with the first head of discourse, the apostle's pleasing reflection upon his own past fidelity. We are now to consider,

II. His joyful prospect of a glorious reward.

This is contain'd in the former part of the 8th verse; *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day.* I shall treat of these words in order as they lie; considering, 1. the crown of righteousness it self,

* τὴν πίσιν τηρήσκα.

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together with what is affirm'd of it, that it was *laid up* for the apostle: 2. in what respect it was to be bestow'd, and by whom: 3. the time or season when it shou'd be confer'd on him.

1. The *crown of righteousness* it self, together with what is affirm'd of it, that it was *laid up* for the apostle: *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.* The connexion of this part of the text with the former, might very well have been render'd by, *it remains*; which is most agreeable to the original word λοιπόν. The apostle had been speaking of his own faithfulness in performing the part assign'd to him: and now he signifies what was to be expected from that God in whose service he had been employed, and upon whose promise he had depended for his encouragement: *It remains that there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*

Now, by this *crown of righteousness* is meant, in allusion to the garlands adjudg'd as tokens of honour to the victors in the foremention'd exercises, that immortal felicity which God has taught us to expect as a reward of faithfulness in his service. The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* has largely shewn that God's people of old died in the hope of this happiness, and that the prospect of it was the grand encouragement of their obedience. But for the certainty of it we are indebted to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom likewise the blessing it self will be bestow'd. It was Christ
who

who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light thro the gospel, 2 Tim. 1. 10. He taught, when upon earth, (and he did not teach without producing good proofs of his divine commission) that whosoever believeth on him, hath everlasting life, Joh. 6. 47. And ch. 3. 14, 15. he assured Nicodemus, that he was to be lifted up with this design, that whosoever believed on him, should not perish, but have eternal life: And ver. 16. that this proceeded from God's love to the world, who gave his only begotten Son for this very purpose, that whosoever believed in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. To the same effect he declared with an asseveration, Joh. 5. 24. Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.

But with regard to this happiness, which is mention'd in our text under the similitude of a crown of victory, it may be useful to observe, that the same idea is convey'd in scripture by divers other figures, all of which are design'd to set it forth as something extremely desirable. Thus we have seen that our Saviour frequently spoke of it by the name of *life*, which is the foundation of all happiness, and without which 'tis impossible to have any enjoyment; and that especially he took delight in assuring men that the happiness of God's people would be a *life of eternal duration*. And with regard to the excellency of the life which he taught men to hope for, he told his hearers, Joh. 10.

10. that he was come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. Whereby he shew'd that the life he spoke of, far surpass'd any life in this world, tho imagin'd to be ever so happy; inasmuch as there is always a mixture of death in it by sorrows of various kinds. The beloved apostle John, following his master's example, does likewise frequently speak of the saints future happiness by the name of eternal life: as 1 Joh. 5. 11. *This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son, hath life.* And he mentions the promise of eternal life, as the sum and substance of Christ's gospel, chap. 2. 25. To the like effect St. Paul speaks, ver. 1. of this epistle wherein is our text, concerning the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus: and 1 Tim. 4. 8. of the promise of that life which is to come, as being annexed to godliness: and more clearly still, Rom. 2. 6, 7. of God's rendering eternal life to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality. Sometimes the same happiness is represented by rest: as Heb. 4. 9. *There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God:* and Rev. 14. 13. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.* Sometimes by joy: as in our Saviour's parable, Mat. 25. 21, 23. *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Sometimes

'tis spoken of as *an enduring substance*, in opposition to the riches of this world, which take to themselves wings and flee away; as in *Heb. 10. 35.* 'Tis very often call'd *glory and honour*; as *Rom. 2. 10.* *an eternal weight of glory*, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* 'Tis frequently consider'd as an *inheritance*; which word is plainly design'd to set forth the honour and advantage of being the children of God. Particularly, 'tis call'd *an inheritance in light*, *Col. 1. 12.* *an eternal inheritance*, *Heb. 9. 15.* *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away*, *1 Pet. 1. 4.* 'Tis call'd by our blessed Saviour, *the inheriting of a kingdom*, *Mat. 25. 34.* Nor is this last glorious title thought sufficient by it self: but the same happiness is elsewhere spoken of by the name of *a kingdom which cannot be moved*; in opposition to the weak and tottering state of all human establishments, with all the advantages and dignities which depend upon them: *Heb. 12. 28.* And lastly, 'tis sometimes represented by the removal of all unhappiness: as *Rev. 21. 4.* *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

I chose to mention briefly all these different ideas which the scriptures give us of the heavenly felicity; that we might have the more enlarged view of that happiness, the whole of which is manifestly design'd by the similitude of *a crown* in our text, tho it cannot in its full extent be convey'd by that, or indeed by all

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of them together. However, there seems to be a peculiar excellency in this metaphor, with which the apostle continues the allegory he had begun, *ver. 7.* where he spoke of having *fought the good fight, and finish'd his course.* For the crown here spoken of, tho it was no more than a chaplet of leaves, is mention'd as a token of honour, belonging to the conquerors in those exercises, and adjudged to them; which must afford them great joy and satisfaction. By all which are signified the high honour, dignity and glory, to which God will advance those who have been faithful in his service, together with the joy and delight with which they shall likewise be bless'd. Which joy must be exceedingly great, especially when their crown is consider'd as an *incorruptible crown*, whereas the conquerors in those exercises gain'd only a fading garland, as the apostle expresses it, *a corruptible crown.* But, besides this, whatever else is good and excellent, must be included in that happiness which this crown of victory is design'd to represent. And accordingly, some of the other ideas of immortal felicity are in scripture connected with the name of a crown: as when it is call'd, *Jam. 1. 12. a crown of life, which the Lord hath promis'd to them that love him;* and *1 Pet. 5. 4. a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

But, we are farther to observe, that the apostle calls this crown, *a crown of righteousness.* By which I think is understood, a reward of uprightness and integrity; something whereby his fidelity and constancy in the service of his Lord shou'd

shou'd be distinguish'd with peculiar honour. Nor is it a new thing for the whole of a christian's obedience to be signified by this name of *righteousness*. For in this sense our Saviour himself used the word, Mat. 5. 20. *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* In this view therefore the crown of *righteousness* must signify some mark of honour whereby to distinguish him who wears it, as, a *righteous* man, and one so accounted by the righteous God himself.

This crown of *righteousness*, the apostle says, was laid up for him. Which is agreeable to what St. Peter affirms of the *incorruptible, undefiled, and never fading inheritance*, that it is reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 4, 5. 'Tis agreeable likewise to what the same apostle writes to the *Colossians*, ch. 1. 5. concerning the substance of their hope: *The hope which is laid up for you in heaven.* Now, the only remark I would make upon such expressions is, that the future happiness of the faithful will not be confer'd on them without due deliberation; that as the prize for which they contend, is in very safe hands, so no man who regularly strives for it, and who obtains the victory, shall fall short of it; the persons being all perfectly known before hand, and their behaviour and their fitness for the crown being punctually observ'd by one who cannot be led into a mistake, or corrupted with bribes,

or threatned into a perverse and unrighteous disposal. But the mentioning these things leads me to consider,

2. Under what character this crown shall be bestowed, and by whom. Both which are signified by these words; *which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me.*

By *the Lord*, in this place, is evidently meant our Lord Jesus Christ; *who is ordain'd of God to be the judge of quick and dead*, Acts 10. 42. *To him the Father committed all judgment, and therefore judgeth no man himself*, Joh. 5. 22. *but hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he rais'd him from the dead*, Acts 17. 31. If there were any thing yet further necessary to shew who is meant in our text by this *Lord, the righteous judge*; the last words of the text clear it up; where the apostle speaks of those *who love his appearing*, and likewise of *the last day*. Both which expressions denote the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; which is in many other places of scripture describ'd in the same manner. And the *appearance* mention'd in those places manifestly refers to the Son, and not so properly to the Father.

This *Lord, the righteous judge*, the apostle signifies shou'd *give him the crown of righteousness*. In the reading of which words I cannot forbear observing, that instead of *give the original*

ginal word ought to have been translated * *render*; which is more agreeable to the character of a judge. And after this manner the very same word is translated in other places: particularly *Rom. 2. 6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds.* 'Tis likewise the same word which our Saviour uses, *Mat. 6. 6, 18.* when he encourages the sincerity of our prayers and alms, by saying, *Thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

The crown of righteousness therefore is to be bestow'd by Jesus Christ as a *righteous judge*, and by way of reward or retribution; tho the reward infinitely exceeds the value of the service perform'd. And tho by reason of this excellency of a future happiness, and the imperfection of our obedience to which it is promis'd, eternal life is in many places of scripture spoken of as *the gift of God*, and the most faithful servants of God are called *unprofitable servants*, as they cannot be profitable to him, tho they may to themselves: yet he must be a great stranger in the divine oracles, who does not see that it is designedly in a great number of places set forth under the notion of a *recompence* and a *reward*, conferr'd by the *justice* and *righteousness* of God, who has engaged his own faithfulness to make good men and women completely happy.

Thus, *God is just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus*; *Rom. 3. 26. i. e.* he is just in justifying the believer, because he has taught

* ἀποδίδωμι.

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us to expect justification through faith. Again, the apostle tells the *Hebrews*, ch. 6. 10. *God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewn towards his name, in that ye have ministred to the saints, and do minister.* Which words are as it were the copy of our Saviour's own representation of his proceeding at the day of judgment, *Mat. 25. 34, 35. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepar'd for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, &c.* Which plain and undisguised doctrine of our blessed Saviour, was a just occasion to the apostle, to give this character of the blessed God, that *he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6.

How necessary an encouragement this was to our obedience, that God best knew who taught us to expect it. And therefore so long as we freely acknowledge that it is not nor can be strictly speaking a reward of debt, but of grace; instead of dishonouring, we shall glorify the God whom we serve, by keeping this in view while we labour to obtain the crown which he proposes to us, and for which he commands us to strive.

The only thing remaining to be consider'd in this part of the text, is

3. What is meant by *that day*, in which the apostle says the Lord this righteous judge shall render the crown of righteousness to him. And there can be no difficulty in this: because in so many other places it evidently signifies the great day

day of judgment and retribution. Thus are our Saviour's words to be understood, *Mat. 7. 22. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, &c. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* In the same sense the words are used, *2 Thess. 1. 10.* after a large and awful description of the final judgment. And in the same sense again the apostle uses them in this epistle wherein is our text, *ch. 1. 12. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* And ver. 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.* No day had been hinted at before: which shews that this was so usual a manner of speaking as to be easily understood concerning the day of judgment, as deserving to be call'd *that day*, that important day, by way of eminency.

In *that day* of general retribution, the apostle signifies he should have *the crown of righteousness* bestow'd on him. Which affords us this remark; that till then the souls of the righteous will not be made completely happy, tho their state is unalterably fix'd from the time of their passage out of this world, and tho they are even then without all doubt or danger the heirs of immortal felicity.

I shall say but a very few words upon the last part of the text. Which contains

III. The encouragement given by the apostle to all those who in their several spheres of action faithfully discharge their duty.

This is expressed in those concluding words; *and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing.* The connection is, that the Lord, the righteous judge, will in the last day render a crown of righteousness to all those who love his appearing, as certainly as to the apostle *Paul*, and others of his distinguish'd character. This *crown* is not confin'd to apostles and evangelists, nor to any kind of officers in the church, tho ever so faithful and useful; but will be adjudg'd to all true christians, of what degree or denomination soever. For all such are included in the character of *loving the appearing of Christ*; they being properly said to love a thing not yet enjoy'd, who earnestly desire and long for it: and this all christians profess to do, as hoping to have the completion of their happiness usher'd in by that glorious appearance.

I need not mention the magnificent descriptions which the new testament in many places gives of this future *appearance* of Christ. 'Tis enough to observe, that all they who have faithfully labour'd to honour Christ, especially they who have struggled with many difficulties for their firm adherence to his service, must needs look with a joyful expectation and desire for the coming of that day; as knowing that it will be the time of their compleat redemption from all miseries, and of their advancement

to all the happiness they are capable of enjoying.

At this glorious appearing we have good reason to hope and believe, that our dear brother, whose death is the sorrowful occasion of our present assembling, will receive his crown; that crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall render to him, for having fought the good fight, and finish'd his course, and kept the faith. Whose character I shall not set forth very largely, since it is already so well known: and I may rather hope for excuse in omitting several things which so many are acquainted with, than if I should attempt a representation of his full character, and come short of it. I shall therefore principally mention such things as may be presumed not to be so generally known.

The quickness of his own genius, and the diligence of his teachers, very early prepared him for academical studies: so that being sent very young to *Leiden* in *Holland*, he there took up a doctor's degree in philosophy, with no small applause, when he was little more than eighteen years of age. After this he spent some years at *Amsterdam*, under the direction of those two famous men, Mr. *Le Clerc*, and Mr. *Limborch*. His great proficiency in various kinds of learning soon appear'd to the World in those learned letters of his, relating to baptism, which he wrote before he was twenty seven years old, but did not publish till some years after; a work

26 *A SERMON preach'd upon*

which has given him a great and a just reputation; and the defence whereof he had enter'd upon but a little before his death.

His extensive knowledge, and the sweetness of his address, gave him an easy access to men of the greatest figure and worth; by conversing with whom his own abilities were very much improved: and this advantage he constantly pursued.

The large acquaintance he had with the classic authors in both languages, and the progress he made in mathematical studies, and in the most valuable parts of philosophy, were accompanied with a good degree of skill in the oriental tongues. But tho he took a large compass, 'tis evident that he turn'd the whole course of his studies to the work of the ministry: to prepare for which, he spent a very considerable part of his time in the study of the scriptures themselves in their originals, and in comparing them with the versions of various languages, particularly the more antient; whereby he became a great master in the knowledge of the scriptures, and capable of discoursing to advantage upon any point which immediately related to them. Besides this, he employ'd himself with much diligence in consulting the antient commentators upon the bible, and in reading and digesting the primitive writers of the christian church; for whose interpretations of scripture he shew'd a more than ordinary value. And here I think it deserves to be mentioned to his special honour, that he enter'd into a voluntary society, erected
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on purpose to enquire into the primitive doctrines and practices of the christian church, and compare them with the books of the old and new testament, at a time when such a thing could not be done without suffering much reproach for it; and that he continued diligently several years to search into the antient books for this purpose, and by discourse with others to make them familiar to him; the effect whereof might have been very beneficial to the publick, if it had pleased God to prolong his life.

He came later into the constant practice of preaching, than was agreeable to the wishes of those who knew his abilities for that work. But I have seen sufficient reason to ascribe several years of his silence to the goodness of his judgment, in resolving not to come into constant exercise too early; and the remainder to a heavy burden of domestick affairs, which press'd him for some years before he began stated preaching, and prevented his coming into publick service at a time when himself was inclined to it, and when he might have been very useful to himself and others.

Of his happy talent in the ministry, when once he was brought statedly to it, you all are witnesses. Concerning which I shall have occasion to speak more particularly by and by. In the mean time, the consideration that a person so well furnished was content to struggle with so many difficulties as he did, when he might have enjoy'd ease and plenty; that for the sake of what he

believed to be the truths and commands of Christ, he chose to minister in an unfashionable and despised way, when he might have had both applause and riches in turning his thoughts to some other courses, and that he persisted in this choice to the last; obliges me to observe, that herein he did, like the apostle, *fight the good fight, and finish his course, and keep his fidelity.* He imitated him likewise in his zeal, as well as in his integrity and constancy. But, tho he would be very earnest in defending his own opinion; yet he was far from bearing ill-will to any for the sake of their differing from him, and of very large and generous principles as to the extent of christian communion with regard to any matters merely speculative; and in his conversation in general he shew'd a good and agreeable temper. I might likewise mention his *abundant labours* in the ministry, his *often journeyings* for that purpose, his *weariness and painfulness*, and several other things wherein he resembled the apostle: but I hasten to what I esteem more useful.

Give me leave therefore now to apply myself to you who have been the constant or frequent hearers of so accomplish'd a minister, and to ask you what improvement you have made of his labours. You have heard how he sacrific'd his time, and his strength, and his worldly interests, to the desire of doing good to the souls of men: and you have been witnesses of his ardent zeal in this service of his master; you have heard him most earnestly recom-

recommend the truths of God; you have seen him do it with all the advantages of a lively oratory that you your selves could wish for. Let it never be said that you came for nothing else but to please your eyes and your ears with an agreeable speaker. You will hear the music of his voice no more: you will no more behold the gracefulness of his appearance. But if you have seriously attended to his ministry, you will retain at least some good impressions which he has made upon you. Besides what you have heard from him upon speculative points, you have likewise heard him discourse of *the blessedness of the pure in heart, in that they shall see God*; you have heard him shew that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; he has warn'd you against rash and uncharitable judging, against *anger and evil speaking*, against subjecting your consciences in matters of religion to any human power, and against resisting the authority of God in any thing that appears to be requir'd and commanded by him. And shall all that he has said upon these and other important subjects, be regarded only as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant * voice? Then your loss in his death will be much greater than you are aware of. But if any of you, whose curiosity has this day led you hither, have attended his ministry no better; I have little reason to hope for doing any

* Ezek. 33. 32,

good with you. Yet since I may possibly never have an opportunity of speaking to you again; let me intreat you to learn wisdom by the death of one, whose labours you have been so far from well improving in his life. Consider you can never *finish your course with joy*, if you go on in this careless manner, and give no heed to the main design of the ministry of God's word. Your reflections at the end of your days, if you are not suddenly taken away, and the opportunity of serious thinking prevented, will be as full of horror, as those of the apostle in our text were of pleasure and satisfaction. You will then be ready to say, with the sinner in the † *Proverbs*, *How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them who instructed me!* And in this deplorable condition, alas what one good argument will you have to comfort you? Call to mind therefore the good instructions you have received from him whose death has now brought you together, and reduce them to practice; assuring your selves, that after your death, for you likewise must die, an impartial account will be taken of the improvement you made of these and any other advantages offer'd to you.

But I would hope, that the greatest part of those who now hear me, had an affection to our

† Prov. 5. 12, 13.

brother and his ministry from a much nobler principle than that of curiosity. Yet let me exhort you, my brethren, to call to mind, and diligently to treasure up, the useful things you have heard from him, and let your practice be influenced by whatever you are satisfied he delivered agreeably to the word of God. This will keep alive his memory to a happy purpose. Remember likewise, that tho there is a great diversity of gifts in the ministers of God's word; yet the word it self, which you are to regard more than their different gifts, is still the same. And, tho your ministers are one after another dropping into the grave; yet remember for your comfort, that *the * word of God liveth and abideth for ever; that tho all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass, (the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away) yet the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

* 1 Pet. 1. 23, 24, 25.

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brother and his ministry from a man's nobler principle than that of consistency. Yet let me exhort you, my brethren, to call to mind, and diligently to treasure up, the useful things you have heard from him, and let your practice be influenced by whatever you are furnished he delivered agreeably to the word of God. This will keep alive his memory to a happy purpose. Remember likewise, that tho' there is a great diversity of gifts in the ministers of God's word; yet the word it self, which you are to regard more than their different gifts, is still the same. And, tho' your ministers are one after another dropping into the grave, yet the word of God breathes and abides for ever; that tho' it is a gift, and all the glory of man at the house of God, (the gifts without), and the flower of the field, yet the word of the Lord endures for ever; and it is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.



* : Rev. J. GALT, 24, 25.

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